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**Every year, 50,000 European women develop and 25,000 women die from Cervical Cancer *although almost every case could be prevented***

**The European Cervical Cancer Association and the International Union Against Cancer Join Forces to Fight Cervical Cancer in Europe**

*Geneva, Switzerland & Lyon France: April 13, 2007*

Every year in Europe, 50,000 women are diagnosed and another 25,000 women die from cervical cancer. Yet we already know how to prevent almost every case. For this reason, the International Union Against Cancer (UICC) and the European Cervical Cancer Association (ECCA) today announced that they will join forces in the fight against cervical cancer in Europe. This new alliance will see the mutual exchange of memberships and the cross appointment of advisors to ensure their individual programmes in the area of cervical cancer prevention are effectively integrated to maximise their impact in Europe.

Mrs Imelda Read, President of the ECCA, said, "We are thrilled with this development that will see a higher degree of cooperation between the ECCA and the UICC which is one of the world's most respected cancer prevention organisations. Ultimately, our closer cooperation **will help to increase the impact of our programmes and lead to further decreases cervical cancer rates in Europe.**"

**Ms Isabel Mortara**, Executive Director of the UICC, agreed and stated, "We already know how to prevent almost every case of cervical cancer in Europe and yet it remains a significant cause of **suffering and death**. By working directly with the ECCA, we can combine our resources to achieve far more progress than either organisation could by going at it alone. Achieving this 'critical mass' is essential to making progress in cervical cancer prevention **in Europe.**"

The ECCA and the UICC will cooperate on a number of projects dedicated to raising awareness of cervical cancer prevention in Europe including the next European Cervical Cancer Prevention Week (21-28 January 2008), **World Cancer Day**, the Eastern European Cervical Cancer Prevention Congress Series.

### **About Cervical Cancer**

Cervical cancer is a disease that develops in the cervix of the uterus. It occurs when cells of the cervix are infected with the Human Papilloma Virus or HPV. HPV can cause the cells of the cervix to become abnormal and develop into a cancer. Fortunately, most women will fight-off their HPV and the abnormal cell will then also disappear. The problem occurs when some do not fight-off their HPV and the infection persists. In these cases, the abnormal cells can progress and they should be removed to prevent a cancer developing.

## **Screening for Cervical Cancer**

Screening is currently done using the Papanicolaou or Pap test. Screening works by finding the abnormal cells in the early stages when they can be easily removed before they can develop into a cancer. The treatment of abnormal cervical cells is usually very simple, successful. Effective organised screening programmes can prevent up to 80% of cervical cancers.

## **New Technologies for Cervical Cancer Prevention**

A variety of new technologies have been developed that include liquid-based cytology and HPV testing. HPV vaccination is also a new possibility that may complement organised screening. These technologies, if deployed within comprehensive organised prevention programmes, offer the potential of further reductions in cervical cancer rates, possibly to the point that almost every case could be prevented in Europe.

## **About the International Union Against Cancer (UICC)**

The International Union Against Cancer (UICC) is the only international non-governmental organization that is dedicated solely to the global control of cancer. With over 270 member organizations in more than 80 countries, UICC brings together a wide range of organisations, including voluntary cancer societies, research and treatment centres, public health authorities, patient support networks and advocacy groups, and in some countries, the Ministry of Health. For more information please visit [www.uicc.org](http://www.uicc.org)

## **About the European Cervical Cancer Association (ECCA)**

The European Cervical Cancer Association was founded in 2002 by 15 different organisations from across Europe, and now has more than 50 member organisations from 24 countries which include cancer societies, cancer treatment centres, medical associations, university teaching hospitals and patient groups. The ECCA was established specifically to co-ordinate a Europe-wide public health education programme that would raise awareness of cervical cancer and how it can be prevented. For more information, please visit [www.ecca.info](http://www.ecca.info)

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